



Aruba's Steelpan History

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Let the rhythm of the steelpan orchestra ignite your Carnival spirit!

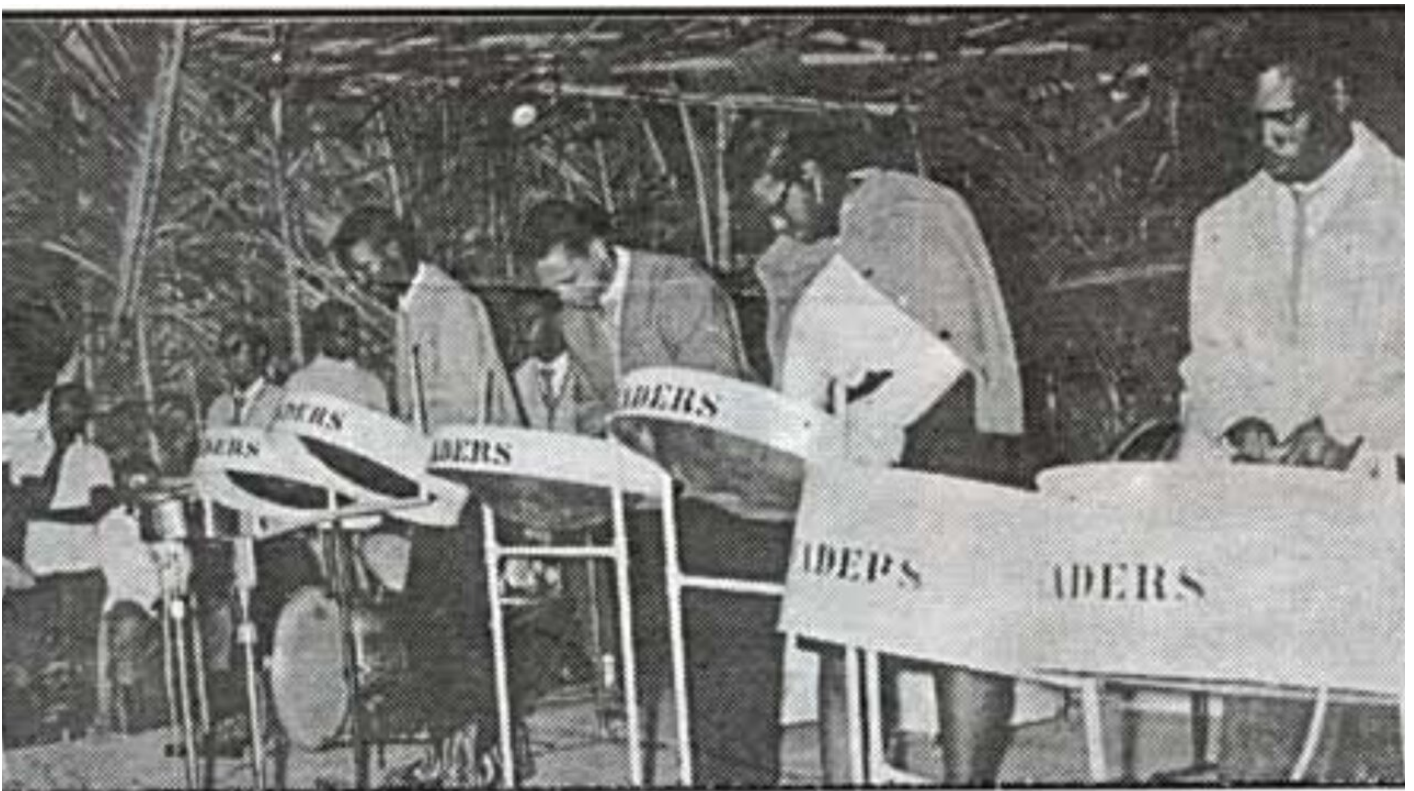
LESA NA PAPIAMENTO

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"INVADERS" from San Nicolás FIRST PRIZE WINNER



The Aruba Tourism Authority proudly presents an extraordinary project to pay homage to the rich history of Aruba's Carnival. We're thrilled to announce a spectacular steelpan orchestra that will kick off four major parades in the Aruban Carnival Celebration. These parades include the Lighting Parade in Oranjestad, Parada di Luz San Nicolas, Grand Parade San Nicolas, and Grand Parade Oranjestad.



In collaboration with the Go Cultura Foundation, which has meticulously planned, produced, and executed this project, we are honored to partner with Aruba's oldest steel band, the legendary

Aruba Invaders, champions of over 70 years. Not only have they mastered the art of music, but they have also been dedicated to passing down their musical knowledge and heritage to newer generations.

Prepare to embark on a mesmerizing musical journey through time as the Aruba Invaders perform the most emblematic Carnival tunes that have become the heartbeat of Aruban happiness. Everyone is invited to revel in the music, capture unforgettable moments through videos and photos, and be part of this historic project.

Aruba's Steelband Legacy: A Rhythmic Tale

In the enchanting era of the 1940s, the soul-stirring notes of the steelpan arrived on the shores of Aruba, marking the beginning of a musical revolution. Guided by the skilled hands of Trinidadian maestro Leonard Turner, "the Invaders" emerged as the vanguards of this melodic uprising, crafting enchanting tunes from The Lago Refinery oil drums.



Picture the scene: young men, inspired by the beats echoing from the Trinidadian streets, gathered under Turner's leadership in 1945. Using their newfound skills, they transformed discarded oil drums into musical marvels, fusing Caribbean rhythms with sambas, rumbas, and contemporary Aruban melodies.



By 1948, Turner officially crowned his musical creation, "The Invaders," becoming the first professional steel orchestra on the island. In 1951, Vincent Bacchus, another luminary from the original Invaders in Trinidad, joined forces with Turner, amplifying the harmony that resonated from their steel creations. Together, they birthed "The All Stars Steel Band."



As time danced forward, Aruba witnessed the emergence of other steelpan maestros. Paul Connor orchestrated the "Caribbean Stars," while Dennis Jones curated his unique steelband. Edgar Connor, one of the youngest steelpan players, formed his band in 1952, paving the way for a proliferation of steelbands across Aruba, each with its distinctive rhythm and flair.



Fast forward to today, the echoes of this musical legacy are carried forth by the Aruba Panman Foundation, championed by Mr. Lee Connor, the leader of the enduring Aruba Invaders. The tradition lives on as Mr. Connor, along with his brothers, diligently imparts their expertise to the younger generations. In a nod to their commitment, the Aruba Invaders, the oldest steelpan group on the island, proudly opens this year's parades. Join us in celebrating the timeless rhythms and enduring spirit of Aruba's steelpan heritage!

Two part documentary: Steelband: Echo of a Great Era

Steelband: eco di un gran epoca Part 1 of 2



Steelband: eco di un gran epoca part 2 of 2



Ready for the full rhythmic journey?

Uncover the vibrant history of Aruba's steel bands from the 1940s.

Read more about this extraordinary tale from 1953 here:

[Esso News Vol. 14 No. 5 - Feb 27, 1953](#)

A selection of Aruba's Carnaval Classics 🎵



Aruba's Carnaval 70 playlist

Edjean Semeleer
21 videos



▶ Play all

↻ Shuffle

Steelpan Through the Decades









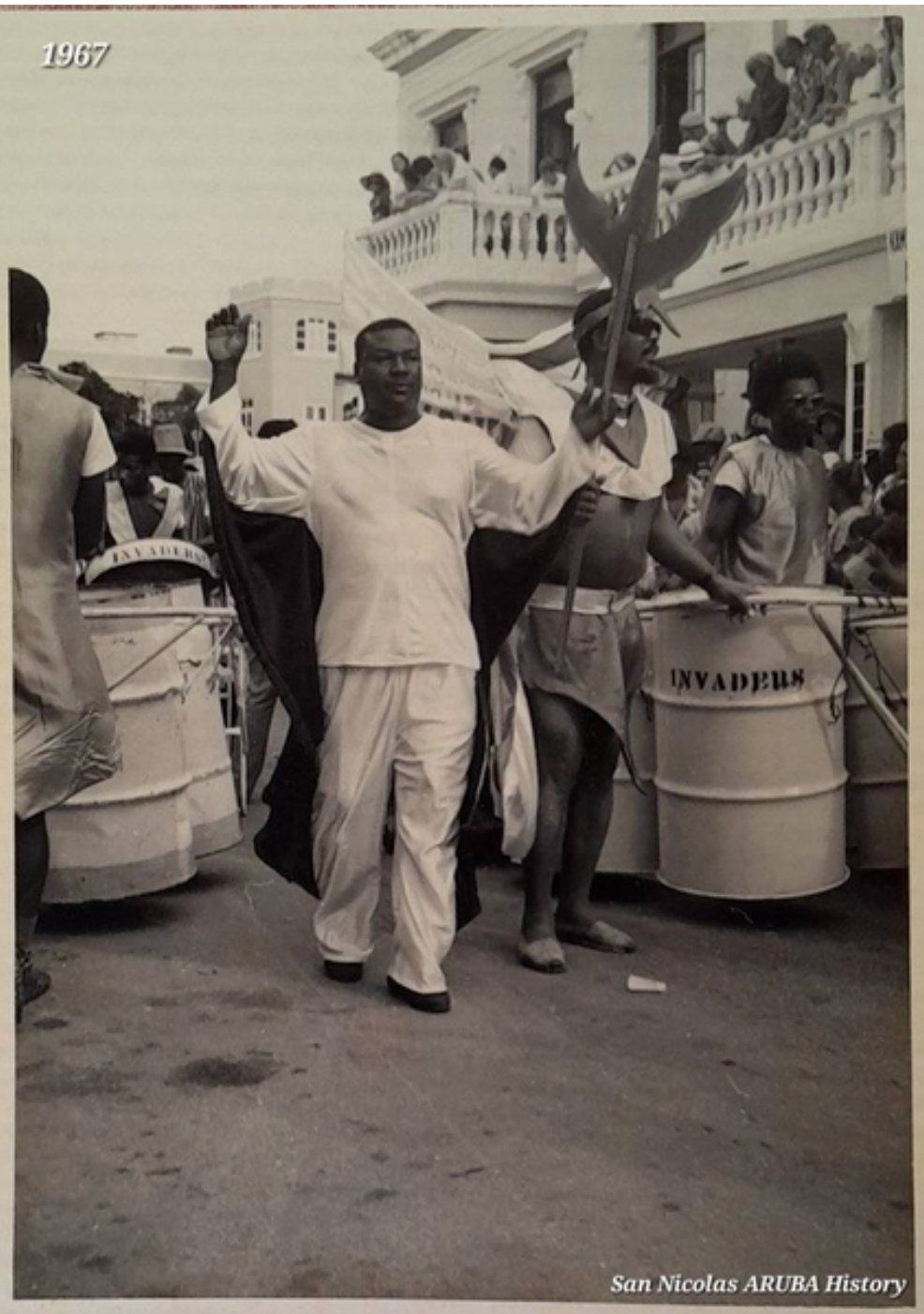








1967



San Nicolas ARUBA History





A special 'Thank You' to the following organisations for sharing their knowledge and media:

Departamento Arubiana-Caribiana of Aruba's National Library (Sra. Graciela Nedd-Cheng) <https://www.bna.aw/digital>

Archivo Nacional di Aruba, Aruba's National Archive: <https://coleccion.aw>

Sra. Maybelline Arends-Croes

Rebecca Roos Productions: <https://www.youtube.com/RoosProd>